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Housekeepers' Chat

Tuesday, February 11, 1930.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "How to Care for Shoes." Questions and answers approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available: "Leather Shoes: Selection and Care."

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Do you remember when you were a small girl, or a small boy, and your mother sent you to the cobbler's, to have your shoes mended? If you were the possessor of only one pair of shoes, you probably had to wait while the cobbler put a sole on your shoe, or straightened a run-down heel. I usually had a hole in my stocking, the day I visited the shoemaker. And always, some of my friends would drop in, and discover me in my sad state of disrepair. It is hard to be non-chalant, under such circumstances.

Those were the days when we had our shoes mended regularly; we had to, for our family budget wouldn't stand the strain of new shoes, very often. I can remember my mother sighing with relief, when spring settled down in our middlewest country, and there were many barefoot days ahead.

But I must not reminisce, any longer. My subject is "How to Care for Shoes," and if I don't say something about the subject, why have a subject?

Proper care of well-selected shoes saves from one-quarter to one-half in shoe bills, and at the same time keeps our feet neatly and serviceably shod. Shoe trees help a great deal in keeping shoes in their original shape. If shoe trees aren't available, the use of paper pads or stuffing is fairly satisfactory.

One good way to save shoes is to have two pairs, for alternate daily wear, so that each pair can dry out and air between times. Perspiration is very hard on leather.

Mud, water, or excessive dryness also ruin leather; oil and grease preserve it. Therefore, we can extend the life of our boots and shoes by keeping them clean, pliable, and water-resistant. Shoes for heavy outdoor use need greasing. Those for street wear need polishing only, although the soles may be oiled or greased. Castor oil is good for patent leather -- did you know that a light, even oiling, with a little castor oil, on a cheesecloth pad, once or twice a month, will help to keep patent leather from cracking? Shoes thus cared for last much longer than shoes which are neglected.

A word about repairing. It is never true economy to wear down-at-the-heel, dilapidated shoes. They neither protect the feet, nor properly support the body. What might be saved in leather may be paid eventually to foot specialists and



doctors. The minute a seam begins to rip, the upper cracks through, a heel twists out of shape or runs down, or a hole wears through the outsole, the shoe needs mending.

Heels should always be kept "squared up." When they begin to run down on one side, both the shoes and the body are put under a strain. The shoes are soon permanently twisted out of their normal position and shape, and the feet, ankles, and legs may be twisted also.

Shoes are easily damaged when wet. Wet leather is soft, so that it readily stretches out of shape, and stitches cut through it easily. Do you know the proper way to dry wet shoes? Don't let them get too hot, for wet leather "burns" much more readily than dry leather. If the leather becomes hotter than the hand can bear, it is almost sure to be ruined. People often spoil a good pair of shoes by placing them while wet against hot radiators in street cars, against hot steam pipes or stoves, or even in hot ovens. When dried too fast, and without care, shoes shrink and become hard, tight, and out of shape.

This is the proper way to dry shoes: First, wash off all mud and grit, with tepid water. Oil or grease work shoes. Use castor oil on street shoes. If you apply the castor oil with a piece of cheesecloth, lightly and evenly, and rub it in well, the shoes will take a good shine when dry. Don't use too much castor oil, or the polishing will be difficult. Then straighten the shoe -- counter, heel, vamp, and toe -- and stuff the shoes with crumpled paper. Set the shoes aside, in a place that is not too warm, and let them dry slowly.

Never put them close to a hot stove or radiator, and do not wear them until they are thoroughly dry. It's a good plan to polish street shoes once or twice, as soon as they are dry.

There is an excellent bulletin, about shoes. Would you like to have a copy? This bulletin describes the different kinds of shoe leather, tells how to select shoes which fit the feet, and how to take care of shoes. It contains formulas for waterproofing shoes. "Leather Shoes, Selection and Care," is the name.

Let's spend the rest of our time answering questions. Here's a good one, from a homemaker who wants to know how to remove a spot, on the wall paper, over the davenport, a spot left by some one who let the barber put too much oil on his hair.

I'm sorry to say that I couldn't find a method of removing these spots. Sometimes a little French chalk or talcum powder, dusted on these places and then brushed off lightly, will help. With some wall papers, it is possible to erase surface spots, with art gum. However, if the soil has gone deeply into the wall paper, there's no successful way to clean it without leaving a streak.

The next request is for a Chinese recipe, Chow Mein. I don't have a recipe for Chow Mein, but I have a dandy one for Chop Suey. It's in the new up-to-date leaflet, called "Pork in Preferred Ways." Chow Mein is made in very much the same way as Chop Suey, except that it is generally served with Fried Noodles.





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By the way, while we're talking about this new leaflet -- I wish you'd do me a favor. Do you remember the old-fashioned government bulletins, with their staid, dignified way of presenting information? Well, I wish you'd get a copy of an old bulletin, and compare it with one of the new leaflets. Compare it with "Pork in Preferred Ways," or "Lamb As You Like It," or "Suits for the Small Boy," or "Dresses for the Little Girl." Then let me know which you like better -- the old-fashioned bulletin, or the modern leaflet, with its neat illustrations, and its attractive type. Will you do that? I'll send your letters to the Menu Specialist, and the Recipe Lady, and the people who work on the children's leaflets. They want to know what you think of their work.

Here's another question: "Do you have a bulletin which tells how to set in sleeves, and make a model dress pattern? I am a dressmaker, and I would appreciate having anything you can send me, about cutting out dresses, fitting them, and putting on the finishing touches."

I'm sending you a copy of "Fitting Dresses and Blouses." I think this handy bulletin will answer all your fitting questions, with fitting answers. Excuse the pun -- it was not intentional. Perhaps I'd better send you "Suits for the Small Boy," and "Dresses for Little Girls" also.

The next question -- well, this is an odd question -- from a youngster who is interested in homing pigeons. That's the first request I've ever had, about homing pigeons, but I think I can find you something. Seems to me Uncle Ebenezer had a book on the subject once, when he went in for homing pigeons, as a hobby. Believe he told me about a pigeon which returned home from a distance of more than 1,000 miles, in two days. I'm getting interested myself, now. I'll let you know, soon, what I can find out about homing pigeons.

Be sure to have your pencils and paper tomorrow -- for there will be a good menu.

Wednesday: "How Much Sleep for the Baby?"

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